

# ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

## THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT



March, 2021

10:00 a.m.

## INTRODUCTION

*The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world.*

## PRELUDE



+ GATHERING +

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

**Congregation (C) Amen.**

P God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Fountain of living water,

**C pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.**

P Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are ☩ forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

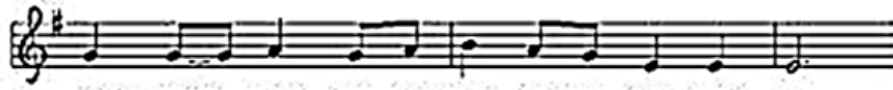
**C Amen.**



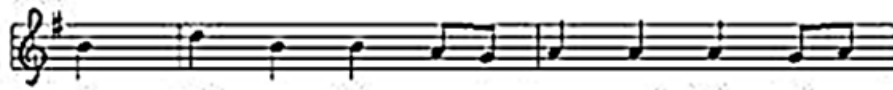
1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the  
 2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .  
 3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a  
 4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the  
 work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the  
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your  
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.  
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.  
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.  
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



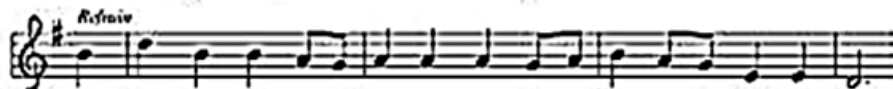
You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my  
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to  
 The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the  
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my  
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the  
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry  
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be best. Could the world be a - bout to turn?  
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



*Refrain*  
 My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



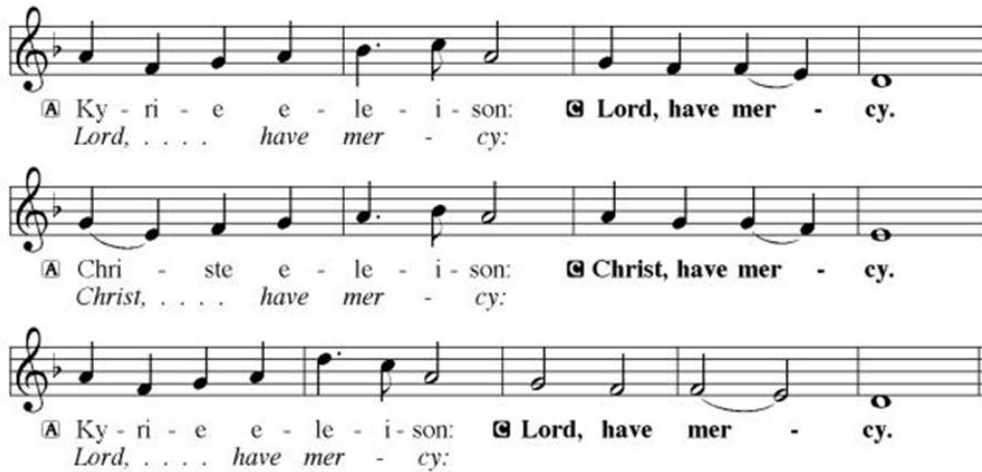
Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

## GREETING

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion  
Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C** And also with you.

## KYRIE



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **G** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*

**A** Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **G** Christ, have mer - cy.  
*Christ, . . . . have mer - cy:*

**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **G** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*



## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** Let us pray.

Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.



+ WORD +

**FIRST READING: Exodus 20:1-17**

*After escaping from slavery, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai, where God teaches them how to live in community. The Ten Commandments proclaim that God alone is worthy of worship. Flowing from God, the life of the community flourishes when based on honesty, trust, fidelity, and respect for life, family, and property.*

<sup>1</sup>God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; <sup>3</sup>you shall have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, <sup>6</sup>but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. <sup>7</sup>You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. <sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work. <sup>10</sup>But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

<sup>12</sup>Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup>You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>You shall not steal.

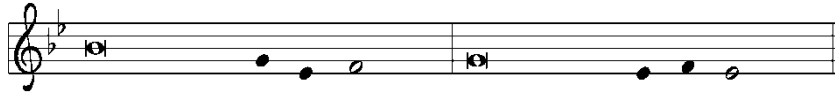
<sup>16</sup>You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Reader            The word of the Lord.

**C**                **Thanks be to God.**

*We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader 1The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,  
and the sky proclaims its | maker's handiwork.

C      <sup>2</sup>One day tells its tale | to another,  
                 and one night imparts knowledge | to another.

L           <sup>3</sup>Although they have no | words or language,  
               and their voices | are not heard,

C      4their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends | of  
the world,  
             where God has pitched a tent | for the sun.

L       <sup>5</sup>It comes forth like a bridegroom out | of his chamber;  
          it rejoices like a champion to | run its course.

C    ‘It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the  
end of | it again;  
          nothing is hidden from its | burning heat.

L     7The teaching of the LORD is perfect and re- | vives the soul;  
          the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to | the simple.

C <sup>8</sup>The statutes of the LORD are just and re- | joice the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light | to the eyes.

L     ʾThe fear of the LORD is clean and en- | dures forever;  
          the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous | altogether.

C <sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold, more than | much fine gold,  
sweeter far than honey, than honey | in the comb.

C <sup>12</sup>Who can detect one's | own offenses?  
Cleanse me from my | secret faults.

C     <sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be  
           acceptable | in your sight,  
           O LORD, my strength and | my redeemer.

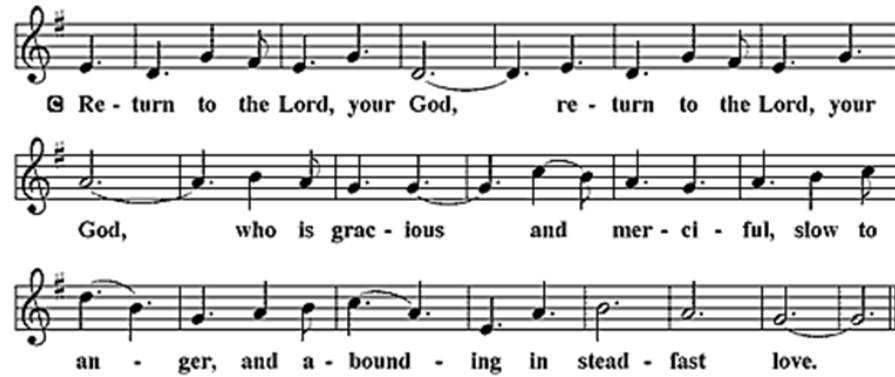
**C** Amen.

*The word of the cross is pure foolishness and nonsense to the world because it claims that God is mostly revealed in weakness, humiliation, and death. But through such divine foolishness and weakness, God is working to save us. The center of Paul's preaching is Christ crucified.*

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

C Thanks be to God.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



### GOSPEL: John 2:13-22

*Jesus attacks the commercialization of religion by driving merchants out of the temple. When challenged, he responds mysteriously, with the first prediction of his own death and resurrection. In the midst of a seemingly stable religious center, Jesus suggests that the center itself has changed.*

P The holy gospel according to John, the second chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>13</sup>The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. <sup>15</sup>Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." <sup>18</sup>The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But he was speaking of the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**



SERMON     *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

HYMN OF THE DAY     736     *God the Sculptor of the Mountains (vs. 1 & 4)*



1 God the sculp-tor of the moun-tains,     God the mill-er of the  
2 God the nui-sance to the Pha-raoh,     God the cleav-er of the  
3 God the dress-er of the vine-yard,     God the plant-er of the  
4 God the un-ex-pect-ed in-fant,     God the calm, de-ter-mined

sand,     God the jewel-er of the heav-ens,  
sea,     God the pil-lar in the dark-ness,  
wheat,     God the reap-er of the har-vest,  
youth,     God the ta-ble-turn-ing proph-et,

God the pot-ter of the land:     you are womb of all cre-  
God the bea-con of the free:     you are fount of all de-  
God the source of all we eat:     you are host at ev-'ry  
God the re-sur-rect-ed truth:     you are pres-ent ev-'ry

a-tion,     we are form-less; shape us now.  
liv- 'rance,     we are sight-less; lead us now.  
ta- ble,     we are hun-gry; feed us now.  
mo- ment,     we are search-ing; meet us now.

## APOSTLES' CREED

P     Let us confess our faith.

C     I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of

saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Each petition ends: Hear us, O God.*

*Congregational response: Your mercy is great.*

## OFFERING HYMN

*The assembly stands to sing the offering hymn as the collection and gifts are brought forward.*



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were  
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.  
Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we  
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,  
Lord, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

## + SENDING +

**BLESSING** *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

C Amen.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SENDING HYMN**      660      *Lift the High Cross (vs. 1-3)*

*Refrain*



Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim till

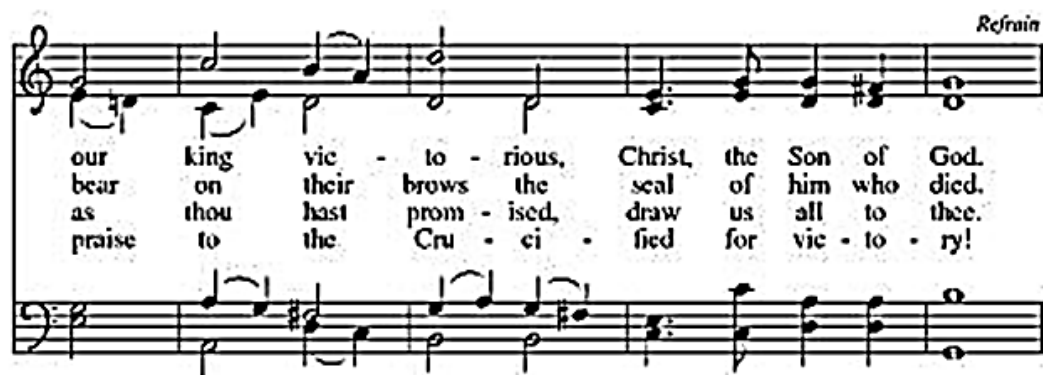


all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.



1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,  
2 All new - born ser - vants of the Cru - ci - fied  
3 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,  
4 So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

*Refrain*



our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.  
bear on their brows the seal of him who died.  
as thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.  
praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

## DISMISSAL

P We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:

**C to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.**

P Go in peace. Share the good news.

**C Thanks be to God.**

+ + +

Sundays and Seasons v.20200805.1416  
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### Calendar for March 7 - 14

March 7	Sun.	10:00 a.m.	Worship (online), Third Sunday in Lent
10	Wed.	Noon	Bible study (online)
14	Sun.	10:00 am	Worship (online), Fourth Sunday in Lent

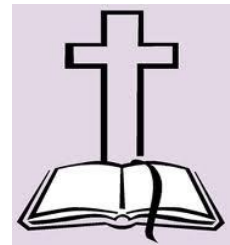
#### Next Sunday's Readings, Fourth Sunday in Lent:

[Numbers 21:4-9](#)

[Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22](#)

[Ephesians 2:1-10](#)

[John 3:14-21](#)



## PRAYER REQUESTS

***New concerns:*** Mark Canning recovering from heart surgery; Mark Eagelfeld (friend of Judi Duffy), being treated for COVID.

***For the sick:*** Val Sullivan; Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); Don Dowd; Isabelle Taylor (granddaughter of Bill & Connie Taylor); being treated for rheumatoid arthritis and Primary Immunodeficiency; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Dan

Graney (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Jamie Ann Meyers (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Gerhard Hofer (brother-in-law of Ridy Hofer).

***In treatment for cancer:*** Stephanie Barber; Cathie Nitti (niece of Sharon Simmons); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Maggie Soff (friend of Sandy Sampson); James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Isabell Cintron (friend of Sharon Simmons); Sarah Lucas (friend of Cassandra White); Bruce Blubaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); Tiffany Nuce and unborn baby (family of Barbara O'Donnell); Chris Dickman (synod councilmember); child of Pr. Katrina Foster (friend of Cheryl).

***For health and protection:*** For all affected by coronavirus: those experiencing mental health difficulties due to isolation; those with the disease struggling to recover; those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personal, EMTs, the millions of unemployed people, etc; all immigrant families split apart by US Government; for the unaccompanied children entering the US, including those unaccounted for”.

***For prisoners:*** Femi and Eddie; all those on death row.

***Other concerns:*** Karen Olson; Blanche White (Melissa Barton).

***Church concerns:*** St. Stephen's Congregational Council; The Florida-Bahamas Synod Council all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

***World concerns:*** For all recovering in the Florida Panhandle from Hurricane Michael, including Messiah Lutheran Church; the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands continuing to recover from hurricanes; migrants fleeing violence in Central America; all those migrants and asylum seekers imprisoned by the US government; the people of Venezuela (birthplace of Bp. Suarez) and Hong Kong; for the Supreme Court as it considers cases involving the LGBTQ community.